

CSCE NEWS RELEASE

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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Commission and Sierra Club Announce Film Presentation: “Secret Ecology—The Ecological Dangers of Russia’s Crumbling Nuclear Submarine Fleet”

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Washington, DC—Today the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, announced a Film Presentation to be held jointly with the Sierra Club of the documentary film:

Secret Ecology: The Story of Alexander Nikitin

Thursday, April 24

4:00 p.m.

Room 2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC

Open to all Members, Congressional Staff, the Public and the Press

“Secret Ecology” is a documentary film by Tatyana Chernova about Alexander Nikitin, a retired navy captain who served in the Russian Northern Fleet until 1985. From 1985 to 1992 he was attached to the Ministry of Defense, Department for Nuclear Safety. Nikitin was arrested in February of 1995 for helping the Norwegian environmental group Bellona reveal dangerous storage and dumping of radioactive waste from nuclear powered ships in Russia’s Northern Fleet.

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe by law monitors and encourages progress in implementing the provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives and one official each from the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense. For more information about the Commission, please call (202) 225-1901.

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The Northern Fleet currently has 300 nuclear reactors, many of which were taken out of service long ago. Storage facilities along the ocean shores and floating bases pose the risk of a serious nuclear accident and radioactive leaks. The Russian Navy is responsible for these submarines, both those that are in service and for those that have been decommissioned.

Charged with espionage—a charge that carries the death penalty—Alexander Nikitin was released from a St. Petersburg prison on Dec. 14, 1996 after over ten months in pre-trial detention, but may not leave the country. He is listed as Amnesty International's first and only political prisoner in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. The Commission has written to Russian President Yeltsin on Nikitin's behalf.